

PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE BUCHAREST METROPOLITAN AREA – INERTIAS AND CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

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Rezumat

Municipiul București este orașul cel mai dezvoltat al României și care înglobează poate, cele mai multe superlative în orice domeniu pentru a i se descrie importanța în teritoriul național. El este singura capitală europeană fără o politică urbană integrată și coerentă adoptată de către stat. Există intervenții de ameliorare locale și de termen scurt care nu se bazează pe direcții generale de dezvoltare a teritoriului pentru că acestea ori nu sunt formulate, ori nu sunt asumate de organele de decizie abilitate. În general, problema este absenta stabilirii parteneriatului între actorii elaboratori de proiecte urbane și actorii implementatori ale acestor proiecte. Municipiul București dispune de rezerve importante de potențial, dar starea generală este, încă, departe de a corespunde exigențelor recomandate de politica de dezvoltare de tip european. Pierderea de potențial ca urmare a amânării deciziei de modernizare nu numai că produce efecte negative imediate, dar induce pe termen mediu și lung pierderi enorme, solicită costuri tot mai mari, cu rezonanță în întreg sistemul economic și în condițiile de viață ale zonei. În prezentul studiu încercăm să evaluăm politicile publice ale administrației locale cu privire la zona metropolitană a capitalei, politici care ar trebui centrate pe două axe principale – coeziune teritorială și policentricitate. Ca urmare a dificultăților de înțelegere a acestor două elemente de către politicieni și în consecință a încetării procesului de implementare, evaluarea realizată de noi va urma o abordare calitativă. Concluziile derivă din rezultatul eforturilor întreprinse de către CPUMB pentru convingerea politicienilor în a folosi și implementa soluțiile reieșite din cercetările și studiile efectuate în această direcție.

Cuvinte cheie: Zona Metropolitană București (ZMB), politici publice, coeziune teritorială, policentricitate

Abstract

Bucharest, the most developed city from Romania, covers perhaps most superlatives in any field for describing its importance in the national territory. This city is the only European capital without having an integrated and coherent urban policy adopted by the state. There are the short term local interventions of adjusting trend, specific to Romania, that don't rely on general directions of territorial development, because they are neither intended nor assumed by the competent decisional authorities. In general, the problem is lack of partnership between the project elaborating actors and the implementing actors of those projects. Bucharest municipality has important potential reserves, but the general status is far from corresponding to the demands recommended by the European development policy. The loss of potential, as a result of the decision of modernization postponements, produces both immediate negative effects, and also induces vast losses on a medium and long term. It requires greater costs, with resonance in the entire economic system and in the living conditions of the area. In present study, we try to evaluate the public policies regarding the Metropolitan Area of Bucharest which should be

centered on 2 main issues – territorial cohesion and polycentric policy. Because of the difficulties of their understanding by the politicians and thus, the slowness of their use, the evaluation made by us is using a qualitative approach. Our conclusions drift from the result of the efforts made by the CPUMB for convincing the politicians of using and implementing the results drawn by researches and studies made.

Key words: Bucharest Metropolitan Area (BMA), public policies, territorial cohesion, polycentricity

JEL Classification: H83, O21, O18, R58

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, authors are trying to evaluate the metropolitan area of Bucharest by analyzing the results of the research made for implementing some of the public policies.

One of the important shifts of perspective at the European planning level was the approach towards a more integrated spatial structure, a structure in which cities have to cooperate. And this cooperation has to be available for Romania also.

The Romanian urbanization is as old as most of this process from the European countries, but unlike most of them, is a slow process. The urban system is marked by Bucharest whose aspirations of success and city performance as a European Capital have started after the 1990.

The dynamics of Bucharest was and it is still marked in a continuous, but not so good manner, by the political forces. These powerful interventions are for controlling its direction and for maintaining their supremacy, instead of just managing the good city life. The directions promoted and voted by the politicians allowed only in few cases free way for sustainable development – supported by the characteristics of the city and its surrounding area. The evolution of the city through these interventions made possible the positioning of Bucharest on the 1st place of urban hierarchy. But there is a big difference between Bucharest and the second tier of cities. This causes a lot of problem at regional level. Because of the powerful accumulation of energy in the Capital, all the political forces have put on their agenda the planning and the idea of controlling it.

The force obtained as a consequence of preferential politics has determined a powerful polarization of the villages and the cities from nearby. While their importance was seen as to be developed fast for a better integration with the city force, they remained only basic suppliers of resource – human and agricultural mainly. They are now as a *“rural space polarized...which is unable to take over the role of a pole of spatial structuring”* (Săgeată, 2006).

The metropolitan development of Bucharest records a major shift once Romania has been integrated in the European structures. This meant the structural and administrative reorganization towards the model proposed by the European policies for balancing the disparities and pushing the competitive

development on the macro-scale and regional level. The main issues of this model are policies of regionalization through which *“the Union shall develop and pursue its action leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion”* (European Constitution, article III-220). Thus, the relation between Bucharest and its territory of proximity influence and far polarization has to be changed by the **territorial cohesion policy**. Even though the research and studies of the administrative institution were made before, they have been neglected and considered unimportant for the politicians.

From now on, local administration has to cooperate with the other partners not only for the specific area, but for the whole region, in order to become more sustainable. In this perspective, the projects started in the '90 by the Capital City Hall for creating the metropolitan area are now integrated with European policies.

From the economic development and territorial point of view, the metropolises are seen as the main actors of supporting the European economy. They represent the centers in which competition, innovation, social equity, people dynamics are improving and pushing forward the economic growth. This is made in order to ensure a sustainable cohesion for reducing the differences among region, by promoting the strengthening of the economic centers.

The new policy at the European level focused on metropolis is **polycentric policy** and it is available through European Spatial Development Policy (1999).

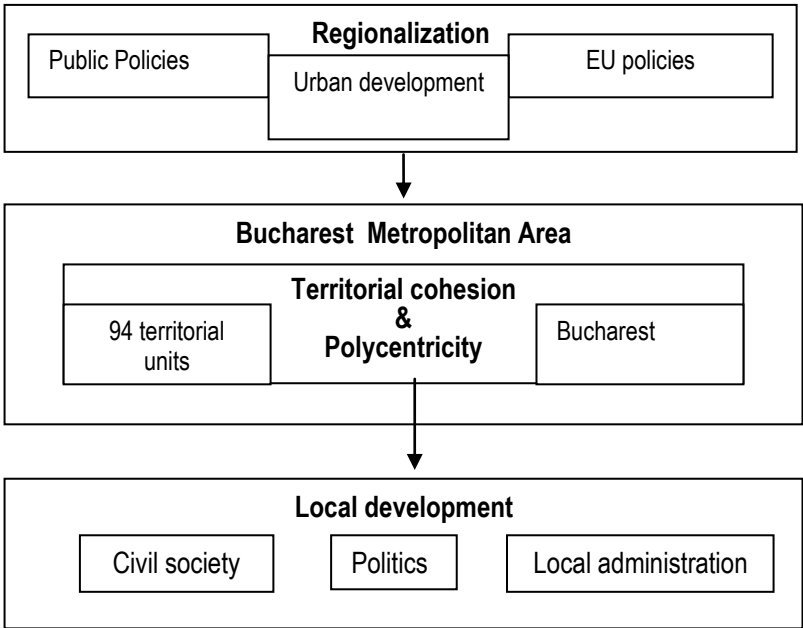


FIG. 1 POLICIES IN BMA

The phase in which metropolitan area of Bucharest is, results from the lack of interest from the politician to allow the one or another solution to be implemented accordingly with the principles of territorial cohesion and polycentric policy. So the evaluation is based upon the activity of the CPUMB for convincing the politicians to use and fulfill the results drawn by researches and studies made here.

2. METHODOLOGY

The few documents and information available for the metropolitan area of Bucharest claim the necessity of explaining the concepts and the limits of our study.

The territorial studies before 1990, constrained by the random individual decisions have looked upon the metropolitan area only as an influence area, support for the resources needed by the capital. This is proved by the fact that the most important city of Romania was surrounded by a large agricultural area, with little diversity at the economic structure.

The research focused on Bucharest development and establishing the limits of its metropolitan area has been largely the interest of geographers: Iordan, 1973; Ianoș, 1987; Iordan, 2003; Săgeată, 2006; Cepoiu, 2008 and Pintilii, 2008. Each of them have tried to analyze the city borders for a better understanding of the city evolution (Mihăilescu, 2003), the commuting area (Iordan, 1973), and after 1990, they have oriented on the limits of the metropolitan areas through various methods and approaches.

Despite of some problems, none of those models were used by the local administration. It resulted an unusual situation in which Bucharest was the administrative center of the Sectorul Agricol Ilfov (now county) (Popescu, 1999), and the cooperation relationship among components of the 2 entities has been strongly disturbed. In all these studies the taxonomical categories have varied and they were used with different interpretation as they begun to be used on the political level.

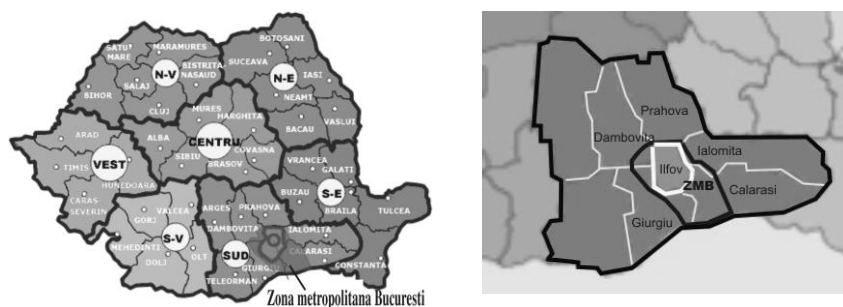


FIG. 2 DEVELOPMENT REGIONS OF ROMANIA

Unlike the European model of metropolitan planning where the capital influences and relates to surrounding area on three to four planning levels (fig. 3), the Bucharest has a real Urban Agglomeration (reflected by the correlations of Master Plans at the functional level) and a Metropolitan Area which both overlap the borders of the 8th Development Region Bucharest-Ifov, which is in fact the metropolitan Region. Moreover, Bucharest region is configured as an enclave inside number three region, case that will increase the risks and threats of development and management. In fact, the 8th region is very small with 1821 km² only and can't represent an optimal space of development for Bucharest Metropolitan Area (in comparison metropolitan area of Budapest – 9000 km² or metropolitan area of Prague – 4000 km²).

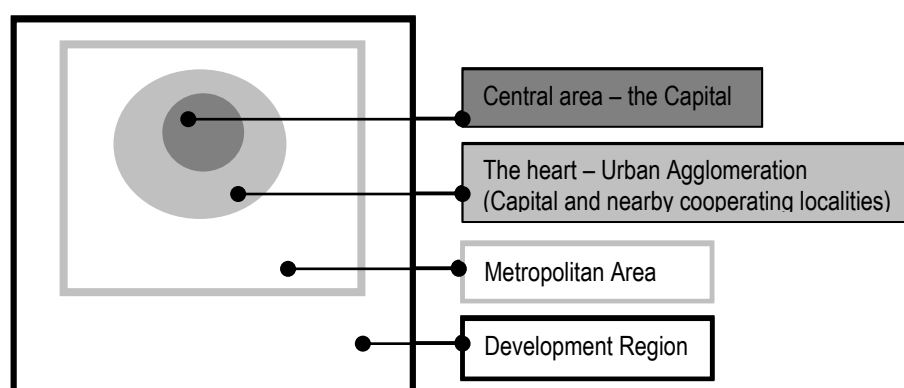


FIG. 3 EUROPEAN MODEL OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

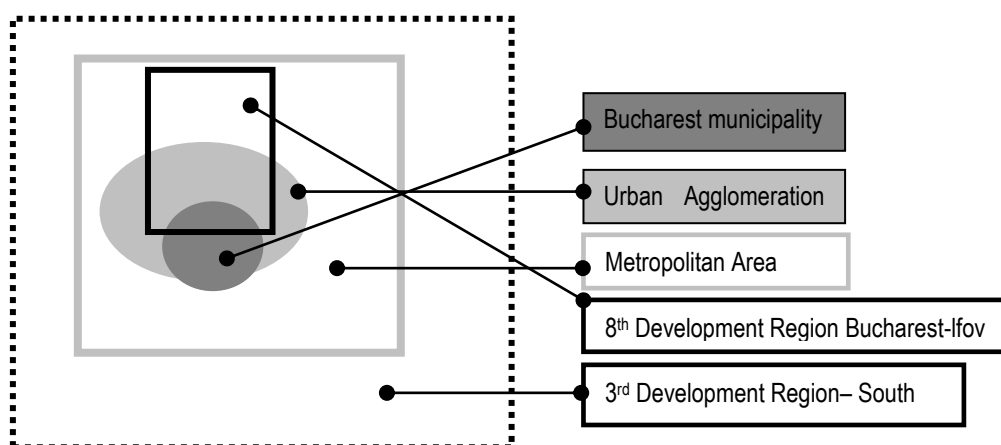


FIG. 4 BUCHAREST MODEL OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

According to the major goal for development strategy of Capital, the metropolitan area has to be strengthened through a comprehensive use of all major qualities existing in it, and which are lacking from the small area of the Ilfov County. Only thus the BMA can be connected to the European Network of Metropolises. This practice needs to be framed as fast as possible in order not to decrease in quality

or continue the chaotic development from the past two decades. In this regard, the planning of a metropolitan area centered on Bucharest is considered to be a top priority.

For a better regulation of BMA have been conducted studies of territorial planning as soon as 1994:

- In 1994, the study for developed Bucharest Master Plan has been made possible an initial research called "Direcții, sensuri și intensități de dezvoltare ale Municipiului București", approved by HCGMB in 1999. The result was the identification and demarcation of supporting area of Capital – the metropolitan area. For the first time the city of Bucharest was approached for development in a polycentric way, even before the approval of this research as a policy in the European Union.
- In 2000, the municipality was approving the Master Plan of Bucharest (Cristea, 1999; HCGMB no. 269), who is emphasized as "the main strategically goal – the identity of Bucharest according to its aspiration of becoming a European metropolis". The polycentric approach from that time has developed easily as it became an European policy, and Bucharest started to cooperate at the regional level with other cities and integrating into European urban networks
- In 2003, the Bucharest administration has included on the list of projects financed by the local budgeted the complex research "Plan de Amenajare a Teritoriului Zonal – Zona Metropolitană București" (PATZ – ZMB). This research has been finalized on its first stage, and approved by the Bucharest City Council (HCGMB no.176/2005), while the final stage is developing. This study is supported by the initial research from "Direcții, Sensuri și Intensități de Dezvoltare" and by the strategy of Master Plan, improving and renewing them. Its purpose is to make a final document which will approve the Bucharest metropolitan area and it will offer a legal framework for regional and local cooperation. The development strategy from the first stage of Metropolitan Area is following the same principle (at that time) of polycentricism with axes of development alongside the main European transportation axes.

The complex study, coordinated by Urban and Metropolitan Planning Centre of Bucharest (CPUMB), had an interdisciplinary approach with the participation of the following institutions:

- University of Bucharest - The Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT) and Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies
- Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest
- Institute of Geodynamics "Sabba S. Stefanescu" of the Romanian Academy

- URBAN PROJECT - Bucharest
- Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies Romania SRL (IHS România SRL)
- From this work, the Bucharest City Hall has identified the area on which Bucharest exerting its influence (fig. 5)

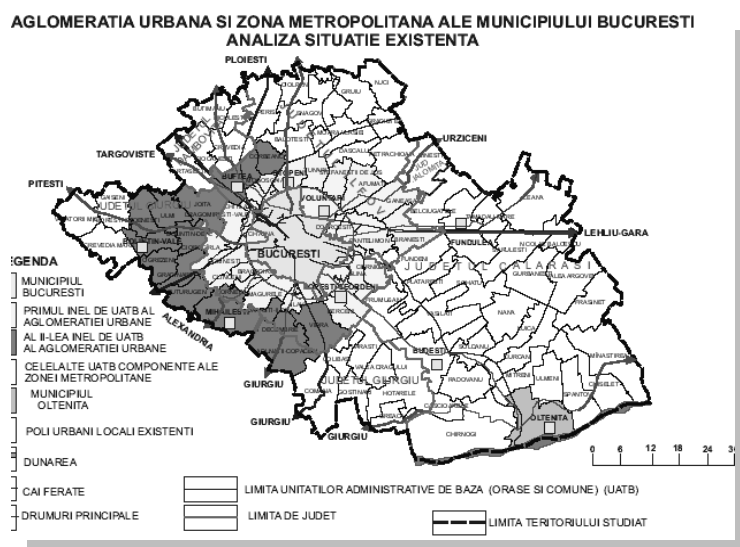


FIG. 5 URBAN AGGLOMERATION AND METROPOLITAN AREA OF BUCHAREST – (SOURCE: CPUMB)

This area is marked by the Ciolpani and Nuci in North and by the Danube River on the south part. The West limit it is Vânători Mici, while on the East there is the settlement Nicolae Bălcescu. At administrative level, the area includes the whole Ilfov County and parts from Giurgiu, Călărași, Ialomița and Dâmbovița counties.

TAB. 1 STRUCTURE OF BUCHAREST AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS (SOURCE: CPUMB)

Area	Surface(km ²)	Population (loc.)	Delimitation
Bucharest Urban agglomeration	1,730	2,300,000	PATZ – ZMB-project
Bucharest metropolitan area	5,046	2,600,000	PATZ– ZMB- project
Urbanized area of metropolitan area	7,227	2,100,000	dynamic
Bucharest municipality	228.2	1,921,751	administrative

According to law 351/2001 the National spatial plan – section IV – Human settlements network, the term of metropolitan area is defined “area created through the voluntary partnership of large urban centers (the capital city of Romania and municipalities of rank I) and the urban and rural settlements in their immediate surroundings, within a radius of 30 km, based on multi-level cooperation”. Even with this

law, the Bucharest metropolitan area cannot function, because it has to rely on the voluntary partnership.

The BMA is completed by law 286/2006 where *„the Metropolitan Area is composed on the basis of a partnership between the cities of first degree and the territorial-administrative units situated in the proximity. The Metropolitan Areas are composed with the special accord of the local councils and their purpose is the development of the infrastructures and of the common objectives. The deliberative and the executive authorities, from each territorial-administrative unit, preserve its local autonomy, according to the law”*.

Under the territorial-administrative level, we have to emphasis that Bucharest doesn't change its present territorial limit and the localities don't lose their independence.

3. EVALUATION OF BUCHAREST METROPOLITAN AREA

In this moment, from the politicians approaches over the current situation and the delays of the implementation of BMA it can be seen the difficulty of the quantitative evaluation. It is too much pressure by the political intervention and by the speculation. Moreover, the continuous disproof of the research as a consequence of changing the political parties undermines all the work because of the necessity of remaking the research all over again. The lack of transparency in the Bucharest public administration determines a different approach each time, which makes impossible the comparison.

The quantitative methodology may be used when the policies are functioning, but at this moment the BMA is still in the politicians agenda on the lower place. This has determined us to make an evaluation of the present situation by a qualitative approach.

The goal of evaluation of BMA relies on the present situation of this territory by identifying the direction and problems. The necessity of their approach it is made by the dissemination of the results obtained by the CPUMB and by the understanding of failures in order to be solved in time.

The governance of metropolitan area is referring, as a tactic, to changes in the development patterns of areas with low densities, by a free cooperation among the local administration, by intervention of the state for ensuring the urban services, by a public-private coordination, by the creation of rational administrative structures for the stimulation of metropolitan development and of the equities among components.

The development directions are determined by the main roads and railways, both from present as well as the planned ones. The territorial local plans should rely on the local patterns and on the necessities

and potential of every settlement. This it will be possible by establishing 8 regional parks, around some of the most important urban poles from the BMA.



FIG. 6 DRAFT OF THE 8 REGIONAL PARKS FROM BUCHAREST METROPOLITAN AREA (SOURCE: CPUMB)

There are proposed the regional parks: Snagov, Grădiște, Brănești, Budești, Comana, Mihăilești, Bolintin and Buftea. They will comprise some of the smaller villages and by a correlation among Master Plans with Territorial Plans, it will be possible the growth of attraction for actors interested in infrastructure and development. This way it can be solved the housing and transportation crisis. Moreover, villages will benefit from the capital invested into the urban utilities.

A clean environment for a good life relies on the creation of Green-Yellow Belt of Bucharest. Its purpose is the preservation of nature alongside with the development of the agriculture for Bucharest. The Green-Yellow Belt includes and enhances the recreational areas, especially forests and lakes. For protecting these areas, it will be implemented a regulation for some villages: restricting their expansion or allowing it with certain conditions only.

The major advantage of such cooperation among local public authorities comprise in attracting mutual funds for development and the participation of all actors to the benefits. All commons (territorial-administrative units) from the Bucharest Metropolitan Area will be directed towards urbanization through the infrastructure development. They will gain importance, population, working places and as a consequence it will grow their economy.

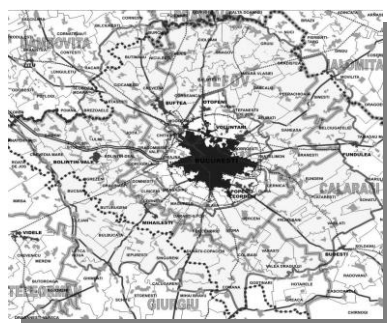


FIG. 7 THE GREEN-YELLOW BELT OF BUCHAREST (SOURCE: CPUMB)

The main issue encountered while doing the research started in 2003 is the lack of interest of the local authorities from the 94 territorial administrative units included in the metropolitan area.

One of the essential factors which determine indifference on such projects is the lack of culture for cooperation: among villages, villages and cities, cities and Capital. The lack of such culture is the main handicap for definition and planning the Bucharest metropolitan space. To this we add the absence of political will in starting the programs. The process of consulting all urban actors involved, without there is no chance of making a coherent framework or settlements cooperation, is in difficulty, though the study has been completed. The development strategy of Capital metropolitan area, aligned to the European principles and regulation, validated only by the General Council of Bucharest, risks staying only as project. The causes for this issue are various:

- the lack of knowledge of EU policies at local level
- the lack of a cooperation culture
- the problems of communist policy focused on centralization
- the fear of losing administrative autonomy and therefore the control of local development, especially in the field of land use
- the primacy of private interest over the public interest
- the overlay of too many decisional institutions

The development programs of administrative structures (counties and territorial-administrative units) and administrative (Development Regions) are uncorrelated among them and even more with the strategy of metropolitan area.

The tendency of collapsing the metropolitan area is more and more present, reducing the borders to those of Ilfov county and thus to the Development Region Bucharest-Ilfov. In competitive terms, this compact area cannot face the plans of development and makes impossible the application of European principles for metropolitan areas. The vitality of the whole region cannot be thought without amplifying the attraction of the two parts: the Capital, and its metropolitan area.

Bucharest has an important potential, but the general situation is far enough from the level required by the European policy. In order for BMA to be on the European map, according with the major goal of the Capital development strategy, its territory has to be strong enough by valorization all its strengths which there aren't in the limited space of Ilfov county. With all these problems generated by the will of acting,

the development of metropolitan area is not functional. Bucharest needs a balanced development with the settlements from its suburban area in order to reach the criteria of urban sustainable development.

It has to be underlined that the main malfunctions of metropolitan area are on the marginal parts: in NE (North of Mostiștea), NW (Butimanu, Ciocănești, Tărtășești) and South where there depopulation and aging are the most present problems.

The polycentric policy is thus undermined and the functionality of the metropolitan area endangered. The Bucharest municipality as urban agglomeration may develop only in relation with its surroundings and its metropolitan area, by trying to use and create stable economic structures.

Only a correlation at the territorial level of settlements development with the major network of infrastructure will be capable of a sustainable use of the resources and creation of new systems of organization and partnership.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The whole evaluation shows the difficulties and the frame for a better development, emphasizing the development of Bucharest Metropolitan Area as being unusable. The relation metropolitan area – metropolis has to be modified for a coherent functionality and a spatial coherence by changing the relations of dominance and subordination to partnership and cooperation. To accomplish this, there are needed redistributions of activities, resizing and new directions of flows.

By a right intervention from the state it is possible to sustain the polycentricism by amplifying the function of local poles for the existing cities. The state remains the only one capable to put order in this situation and to attract both actors and finance for the development of BMA.

An integrated administration at the metropolitan level it will ensure an efficient management of the resources on every territorial level. The goal of implementing the territorial cohesion it will be solved. Until this part, will be seen as uninteresting in solving it by the politicians the future is bleak.

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